

INFANT-SUPPORTING PRIVACY NURSING APRON

This application claims the benefit of U. S. Provisional Patent Application Serial Number 60/461,826, filed April 11, 2003.

Technical Field:

5 This invention relates to cover garments for nursing mothers, and more particularly to a nursing apron that provides at least partial support to a nursing infant, and which has movable privacy flaps.

Background Art:

10 Many mothers breastfeed their infants. In order to obtain privacy, a nursing mother may seek out a location that is not occupied by other people. When this is not practical, the mother may drape a small blanket or other garment over the nursing infant. To avoid the necessity of draping a blanket over a nursing infant in order to obtain privacy, a variety of nursing garments have been designed in the prior art. U. S. Patents 4,106,122,
15 5,544,364 and 5,848,439 are exemplary of such garments. The '364 and '439 patents both disclose cape-like garments that drape over the shoulders of the user, with '439 being split in the front and having viewing openings positioned over the breasts, and '364 essentially covering the entire front of the upper body and arms of the user. The '122 patent discloses an apron-like garment that drapes over the chest of the user and has a pair of flaps
20 overlying openings through the apron in the area of the breasts. All of these prior art garments are completely open and loose at the bottom. They are essentially drapes that cover a nursing infant and the chest of a nursing mother to afford some privacy to the mother.

25 Disclosure of the Invention:

 The present invention comprises a nursing apron that not only covers an infant being breastfed to thereby afford privacy to the nursing mother, but also provides at least partial support to the nursing infant.

 The nursing apron of the invention comprises a piece of fabric having a length to
30 extend from the neck of the user to about the waist, and a width at the top slightly narrower than the shoulders and a width at the bottom adapted to wrap around the front and sides of

the midsection, whereby the apron covers the front of the upper body. An adjustable neck strap extends from the top end, and a neck pad is slidably mounted on the neck strap to distribute the weight of the infant and increase comfort during use. Securing means is attached to the bottom of the apron to secure the bottom snugly about the midsection of the mother so that the apron can support an infant during breastfeeding. A movable side flap on each side of the piece of fabric can be positioned to completely cover the nursing infant, or moved to partially expose the head of the infant while maintaining privacy to the mother.

In the specific embodiment described herein the piece of fabric is trapezoidal in shape, and the movable side flaps are attached to opposite sides between the top and bottom ends in the area of the breasts when the apron is being worn. The neck strap is a closed loop that comprises an extension of bands of fabric stitched along opposite sides of the piece of fabric, and the neck pad is slidable along the strap. The securing means can comprise any suitable means for securing the bottom of the apron around the midsection of the person wearing it, and in the example disclosed herein comprises a band of fabric stitched to the bottom of the apron and having a length such that its opposite ends can be wrapped snugly around the midsection of the mother and tied either in the back or the front to close the bottom of the apron and enable it to support an infant during nursing.

The apron preferably is made from a breathable fabric such as cotton or fleece, or other material that is machine-washable.

Brief Description of the Drawings:

The foregoing as well as other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description and accompanying drawings, wherein like reference characters designate like parts throughout the several views, and wherein:

Figure 1 is a plan view of the nursing apron of the invention, shown lying flat.

Figure 2 is a front perspective view of the nursing apron in use, showing in broken lines the position of a nursing infant.

Figure 3 is a fragmentary rear perspective view showing how the belt can be tied in the rear.

Figure 4 is a front perspective view showing the apron in use with the side flap folded to overlies the nursing infant.

Figure 5 is a front perspective view showing the apron in use with the side flap folded to an open position to at least partially expose the head of the nursing infant.

Description of the Preferred Embodiments:

5 A nursing apron in accordance with the invention is indicated generally at **10** in figures 1-5. The apron comprises a trapezoidal shaped piece of fabric **11** having a top end **12** with a first width preferably narrower than the shoulders of a person wearing the apron, a bottom end **13** having a second width greater than the first width and adapted to extend partially around the sides of the person's midsection, and sides **14** and **15** diverging from
10 the top to the bottom end.

A neck strap **16** is attached to the top end for extending around the neck of the person wearing the apron, and a neck pad **17** is on the neck strap to distribute the weight of an infant held in the apron and increase comfort during use. The neck strap is adjustable in length and, in the particular embodiment described herein, comprises a continuation of
15 strips of fabric **18** and **19** sewed along the opposite side edges of the apron. The neck pad is adjustable along the neck strap to adapt the strap and pad to optimally fit different individuals.

A securing means **20** is attached to the bottom end of the apron to snug the bottom end about the midsection of the person, and in the particular embodiment shown comprises
20 an elongate strip of fabric stitched to the bottom end, with opposite ends **20a**, **20b** adapted to wrap around the midsection of the person, defining a belt that can be tied either in the front (figures 2 and 4-5) or the back (figure 3). As can be seen in these figures, when the belt is tied around the midsection of the person the apron effectively forms a pouch that aids in supporting an infant while it is nursing.

25 Flaps **21** and **22** sewed to opposite side edges of the apron between the top and bottom ends thereof in areas corresponding generally to the locations of the breasts can be folded over the infant's head for privacy as shown in figure 4, or folded to an open position so that the mother can observe the infant's head as shown in figures 5.

The apron preferably is made from a breathable fabric such as cotton or fleece, or
30 other material that is machine-washable. The apron is easy to use, affords privacy, and can aid in supporting the infant while it is being breastfed.

Although particular embodiments of the invention are illustrated and described in detail herein, it is to be understood that various changes and modifications may be made to the invention without departing from the spirit and intent of the invention as defined by the scope of the appended claims.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS: